No Objection to Declassification in Full 2010/04/05 : LOC-HAK-217-6-14-9

(D)

'SENIOR SOVIET OFFICIAL': USSR TO FOIL U.S. MIDDLE EAST MOVES

NC071035 DAMASCUS MENA IN ARABIC TO MENA CAIRO 0900 GMT 7 SEP 75 NC

(TEXT) BEIRUT, 7 SEPTEMBER--THE LEBANESE NEWSPAPER AS-SAFIR TODAY PUBLISHES ON ITS FRONT PAGE AN INTERVIEW WITH A SENIOR SOVIET OFFICIAL WHO SAYS THE SOVIET UNION DOES NOT INTEND TO LEAVE THE MIDDLE EAST TO THE AMERICANS, BUT WILL STRUGGLE BY ALL AVAILABLE MEANS TO FOIL THE EFFORTS OF U.S. DIPLOMACY IN THE REGION AND WILL COOPERATE WITH ALL NATIONAL FORCES IN THE REGION FOR THIS PURPOSE.

THE SOVIET OFFICIAL TOLD THE PAPER THAT AS FAR AS THE SOVIET UNION IS CONCERNED, THE MIDDLE EAST IS NOT ONLY AN INTERNATIONAL ISSUE BUT HAS BECOME AN INTERNAL ISSUE FOR THE USSR.

EXPLAINING HIS STATEMENT, THE OFFICIAL SAID: I DO NOT HIDE FROM YOU THE FACT THAT THERE ARE SOME INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES IN THE SOVIET UNION BECAUSE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THE CITIZENS ARE ASKING: WE HAVE EXTENDED MUCH AID AND EXERTED MUCH EFFORT IN THE AREA; WHY ARE THE RESULTS LIKE THIS? WHERE DOES THE MISTAKE LIE IN OUR POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

THE OFFICIAL DISCLOSED THAT DESPITE THE FACT THAT OFFICIALS IN THE SOVIET UNION ARE BUSY PREPARING FOR THE PARTY CONGRESS IN FEBRUARY, THEY ARE ASSESSING SOVIET POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ARE DISCUSSING A NEW POLICY WITH THE HELP OF THE VIEWS OF ARAB FRIENDS.

THE SOVIET OFFICIAL SUMMARIZED SOVIET RELATIONS WITH THE ARAB STATES AS FOLLOWS: RELATIONS WITH SYRIA ARE GOOD AND CLOSE; LUKEWARM WITH IRAQ; GOOD WITH LIBYA; AND DEVELOPING WITH JORDAN. ASKED ABOUT RELATIONS WITH SAUDI ARABIA, HE SAID: CAN SAUDI ARABIA REALLY ESTABLISH CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION?

REGARDING THE USSR'S RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL, HE SAID CONTACTS WITH THE ISRAELIS SHOWED THEY ARE INSISTING THAT THE INITIATIVE FOR RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS SHOULD COME FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND WITH THE KNOWN CONDITIONS REGARDING THE EMIGRATION OF SOVIET JEWS TO ISRAEL.

AS-SAFIR SAYS THE SOVIET OFFICIAL EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT THE POLICY OF THE EGYPTIAN REGIME WILL LEAD TO ITS REMOVAL FROM THE POSITION LEADERSHIP OF THE ARABS AND ITS ISOLATION FROM THE ARAB STATES.

HE ALSO EXPRESSED HIS BELIEF THAT SYRIA WILL NOT AGREE TO A PARTIAL AGREEMENT ON THE GOLAN SIMILAR TO THE EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT, AND THAT EVEN IF THE UNITED STATES IS DETERMINED TO RAISE SUCH AN ISSUE, IT WILL NOT DO SO BEFORE 1977, OR AFTER THE U.S. ELECTIONS.

7 SEP 1206Z PC/KK

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